

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 59-70 without prejudice or disclaimer.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus for a high speed blending operation comprising a container base and a container lid, the container lid having mounted thereon ~~mixing-blending means arranged for a high speed rotation~~, the ~~mixing-blending means~~ extending through the lid and having, at one end, means for connection to a drive motor external to the container and, at the other end, a ~~mixing-blending element for mixing the blending~~ contents of the container when the drive means is operated, the ~~mixing-blending means~~ comprising a shaft portion locatable through an opening in the lid and incorporating the connection means, and a ~~mixing-blending element~~ portion associated with the shaft portion for rotation therewith, the container lid comprising a rim portion defining a circumferential slot into which the top edge of the container is located when the lid and container are assembled, a radially inner side of the slot extending along an inner wall of the container and in contact with or closely adjacent the inner wall when the lid and container are assembled, and wherein an outwardly convex portion is formed on the lid within the rim portion, the convex portion including the opening into which the ~~mixing-blending means~~ is located.

26. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the outwardly convex portion is of curvilinear dome shape and the ~~mixing-blending means~~ is located centrally thereof.

27. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the outwardly convex portion lies substantially level with the upper end of the container, when the lid is assembled on the open end of the container.

28. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the outwardly convex portion projects above the upper edge of the container, when the lid is assembled on the open end of the container.

29. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the outwardly convex portion is semi-spherical or part semi-spherical.

30. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the outwardly convex portion is transparent.

31. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein container lids assembled with the ~~mixingblending~~ means are arranged to be nestable or stackable with other container lids, when not assembled with the container bases, one container lid being located inside another.

32. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the slot is defined by an outer portion arranged to extend around the top edge of the container, and an inner portion arranged to extend into the container in contact with or closely adjacent the inner wall of the container.

33. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 32 wherein a curvilinear joint is provided between the inner and outer portions of the slot.

34. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 32 wherein the inner portion extends between two and twelve times the distance of the outer portion.

35. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 comprising a support for an assembled container and lid with the lid located on the support, and a clamping member movable to engage the end of the container opposite the lid and locate the assembly during operation of the ~~mixingblending~~ means, and wherein the clamping member includes a clamping surface engageable with the container and extending beyond the side edges of the container and comprising switch means for detecting an obstruction to a clamping action.

36. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 35 wherein the clamping member is reciprocally movable and, upon contacting the container to clamp the assembly, applies a predetermined force to the container in the direction towards the support.

37. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 36 wherein the clamping member is connected to a fixed member through spring means and, upon the clamping force exceeding a predetermined level, the spring means compresses and a signal is generated to stop movement of the clamping member.

38. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the ~~mixingblending~~ element portion is arranged to be assembled with the shaft portion after the shaft portion is located in said opening.

39. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 38 wherein the ~~mixingblending~~ element portion includes an opening through which the shaft portion is located to lock into said opening.

40. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 38 wherein the ~~mixingblending~~ means is assembled onto the lid by first inserting the shaft portion through one end of the lid opening, and then the ~~mixingblending~~ element portion is locked onto the shaft portion at the opposite end of the shaft.

41. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 40 wherein the ~~mixingblending~~ element portion clips onto the shaft portion and is secured thereto by shoulder means on the shaft portion and/or by welding.

42. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 comprising lubrication means to permit the contents of the container, during ~~mixingblending~~, to contact and lubricate the co-operating surfaces of the shaft portion and the opening into the lid, and wherein the lubrication means includes longitudinal slots in the side walls of the opening which constitute a sleeve for said shaft portion, the slots admitting the container contents to act as lubrication.

43. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the container lid includes a product access opening with closure means, the access opening being for accessing the contents of the container after ~~mixingblending~~.

44. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 43, wherein the access opening is in the form of a radial opening.

45. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 25 wherein the container lid includes means for holding product arranged to be mixed with material in the container before, during or after operation of the ~~mixingblending~~ means.

46. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 45 wherein the holding means includes a pocket having an opening for introducing said product into the pocket.

47. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 46 wherein the pocket has mesh ~~means~~ for permitting material in the container to enter into the pocket.

48. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing-Blending~~ apparatus according to claim 46 wherein the pocket is arranged to contain carbonation or flavouring means for carbonating or flavouring product in the container.

49. (Currently Amended) A container lid for mounting on an open ended beverage container, the container lid having located thereon ~~mixing-blending means for a high speed blending operation~~, the ~~mixing-blending~~ means extending through an opening in the lid and having, at one end, means for connection to a drive motor external to the container and, at the other end, a ~~mixing-blending~~ element for ~~mixing the high speed blending of~~ contents of the container when the drive means is operated, the container lid comprising a rim portion ~~for fitting of the lid onto the open end of the container~~ defining, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the lid includes an outwardly convex portion formed within the rim portion, the convex portion including the opening through which the ~~mixing-blending~~ means extends.

50. (Currently Amended) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the outwardly convex portion is of a curvilinear dome shape and the ~~mixing~~blending means is located centrally thereof.

51. (Previously Presented) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the outwardly convex portion lies substantially level with the upper end of the container, when the lid is assembled on the open end of the container.

52. (Previously Presented) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the outwardly convex portion projects above the upper edge of the container, when the lid is assembled on the open end of the container.

53. (Previously Presented) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the outwardly convex portion is semi-spherical or part semi-spherical.

54. (Previously Presented) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the outwardly convex portion is transparent.

55. (Currently Amended) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the lid defines an internal region in which the ~~mixing~~blending means operates, said region having curved surfaces.

56. (Currently Amended) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the lid includes a product access opening with closure means, the access opening being for accessing the contents of the container after ~~mixing~~blending.

57. (Previously Presented) A container lid according to claim 56 wherein the access opening is in the form of a radial opening.

58. (Previously Presented) A container lid according to claim 49 wherein the rim includes slits extending in a generally axial direction.

59-70. (Canceled)

71. (Currently Amended) ~~Mixing apparatus comprising a container base and a~~ A container lid for mounting on an open ended beverage container, the container lid having mounted thereon ~~mixing~~blending means for a high speed blending operation, the ~~mixing~~blending means including a shaft portion extending through the lid and having, at one end, means for connection to a drive motor external to the container and, at the other end, a ~~mixing~~blending element for mixing the high speed blending of contents of the container when the drive means is operated, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the apparatus further comprises lubrication means to permit the contents of the container, during ~~mixing~~blending, to contact and lubricate the co-operating surfaces of the shaft portion and the opening ~~into~~in the lid, and wherein the lubrication means includes longitudinal slots in the side walls of the opening which constitute a sleeve for said shaft portion, the slots admitting the container contents to act as lubrication.

72. (Previously Presented) A method of preparing a blended beverage in a mixing apparatus, the mixing apparatus comprising a container base and a container lid, the container lid having mounted thereon mixing means, the mixing means extending through the lid and having, at one end, means for connection to a drive motor external to the container and, at the other end, a mixing element for mixing the contents of the container when the drive means is operated, the method including the steps of charging the container with product to be blended, fitting the lid onto the container, using a clamping mechanism to clamp the lid onto the container until a predetermined pressure has been reached, and then inverting the container whereby to connect the mixing means to the drive motor for blending product within the container.

73. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 72, wherein a ring type clamping mechanism is used to clamp circumferentially around the container.